March 24, 2014

FACT SHEET: Advancing Global Nuclear Security

In 2009, President Obama launched an ambitious global agenda to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands. During his visit to Prague, the President called on the international community to prevent terrorists from getting access to the building blocks needed for a nuclear bomb by putting an end to dedicated production of weapons-grade materials and securing all of the world's vulnerable nuclear material within four years. He urged countries to lock down sensitive materials, break up black markets, detect and intercept materials in transit, and use financial tools to disrupt their trade.

Translating ambition into action, the President convened an unprecedented Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC in 2010. Forty seven countries from every region in the world committed to work together to ensure that nuclear materials could not be sold or stolen and fashioned into nuclear weapons.

The stakes are high and the threat is real. The danger of nuclear terrorism is one of the greatest threats to our collective security. The hardest part of making a nuclear weapon is getting the material. Even a small amount of nuclear material could kill and injure hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Terrorist networks could acquire the materials to assemble their own nuclear weapon, wreaking havoc on global peace and stability, and resulting in extraordinary loss of life and global economic damage.

Since 2009, the world has made substantial progress. The

United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1887, endorsing a comprehensive agenda to secure all nuclear materials. Individual countries have taken specific and concrete actions to secure nuclear materials in their countries and to prevent illicit trafficking and smuggling. The world has worked to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to ensure it has the resources and authorities it needs to meet its responsibilities. And we have worked to build the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism into a durable international institution.

Earlier this year, the United States and Russia completed implementation of the 1993 U.S.-Russia Highly Enriched Uranium Purchase Agreement, one of the most successful non-proliferation programs in our history. Low-enriched uranium derived from 500 metric tons of highly enriched uranium blended down from 20,000 Russian nuclear warheads, became fuel for U.S. nuclear power reactors. The program supplied nearly ten percent of all U.S. electricity over the last fifteen years. Since 2010, the U.S. has also blended down 24 MT of excess Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) from our own weapons program, and assisted in removing or confirming the disposition of over 2400 kilograms of HEU and plutonium from other countries.

Through the Summit process, we have established a global network of experts who work on nuclear security at senior levels in 53 governments and multiple international organizations. We have expanded bilateral cooperation on nuclear security with dozens of countries worldwide. And the trends we're seeing are very positive:

The number of countries and facilities with HEU and plutonium is decreasing:

- Twelve countries have completely eliminated HEU or separated plutonium from within their borders.

- Twenty seven countries removed or disposed of nearly 3000 kilograms of HEU and separated plutonium.

- Twenty four HEU nuclear reactors in 14 countries were successfully converted to Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) fuel use or verified as shut down.

Security at storage sites is increasing:

- The United States has helped secure 218 buildings in 5 countries storing weapons-usable nuclear materials through physical security upgrades.

- We responded effectively to security issues at the Y-12 HEU site in Tennessee and are applying those lessons throughout our nuclear complex.

More countries are prepared to counter nuclear smuggling:

- The United States is working with 20 countries to enhance their ability to detect, interdict, attribute and prosecute nuclear smugglers.

- 260 sites and ports have been equipped with radiation detection systems, and 41 mobile radiation detection cans have been deployed to internal checkpoints in 15 partner countries.

- We are providing training to U.S. and partner

nation officials in law enforcement, customs, and border security.

More countries are seeking international advice:

· The United States hosted its first-ever international advisory security review in October 2013.

· Twelve other countries have requested international advisory reviews since the first Summit.

The nuclear security architecture is stronger:

· Over two dozen countries have ratified the key nuclear security treaties since the 2010 Summit. The United States continues to pursue ratification of these critical instruments.

· The IAEA's nuclear security team has been elevated and better funded, and has a more rigorous standards development process.

· INTERPOL's radnuke support team has been enhanced.

The United States is committed to continuing its leadership on this vitally important issue. With our allies and partners, we will continue to work to put in place a strong and sustainable global nuclear security architecture designed to reduce the dangers of nuclear weapons and nuclear terrorism while allowing countries to more safely and effectively pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We have fulfilled our commitments, improved security at our facilities, and forged new partnerships. We have

removed nuclear materials, and in some cases gotten rid of them entirely. As a result, more of the world's nuclear materials can never fall into the hands of terrorists who would use them against us. While there is much more to be done, we should be proud of all that we have achieved since the first Summit in 2010, and seize this opportunity to move that progress forward.

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